

Closing the “Donut Hole” Coverage Gap

YOU MAY ELIGIBLE FOR A \$250 REBATE THIS YEAR TO HELP WITH YOUR RX DRUG COSTS

WHO IS ELIGIBLE

Seniors who have Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage and fall into the “donut hole” coverage gap this year will automatically receive a one-time \$250 rebate check. Those who are already getting Medicare Extra Help are not eligible.

WHAT MADE THIS POSSIBLE?

The new Health Care Law passed by Congress and signed by President Obama this year directed Medicare to distribute these checks. This rebate is the Law’s first step toward closing the Medicare donut hole for good. There are some important benefits for Medicare recipients in this law, including free preventative care services that go into effect in 2011.

WHAT IS THE COVERAGE GAP AND HOW WILL I KNOW IF I’VE REACHED IT ?

Most Medicare drug plans have a coverage gap. This means that after you and your plan have spent a certain amount of money for covered drugs, you have to pay all costs out-of-pocket for your drugs (up to a limit). The Explanation of Benefits notice, which your drug plan mails to you each month when you fill a prescription, will tell you how much you’ve spent on covered drugs and whether you’ve entered the coverage gap.

WILL I NEED TO DO ANYTHING TO GET THIS REBATE CHECK?

No. There are no forms to fill out. Medicare will automatically send a check that’s made out to you. **You don’t need to provide any personal information like your Medicare, Social Security, or bank account numbers to get the rebate check. Don’t give your personal information to anyone who calls you about the \$250 rebate check.** Call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to report anyone who asks for this information. You can also go to stopmedicarefraud.gov to learn more about how Medicare is working with law enforcement to stop scams against seniors.

WHEN WILL I GET THE REBATE CHECK?

Checks will begin to get mailed to beneficiaries starting June 1st for those already in the “donut hole.” Checks will be mailed monthly throughout the year as beneficiaries enter the coverage gap and generally should be received within 45 days of entering the gap. However, this is a one-time benefit and beneficiaries who qualify will only receive one check after they reach the coverage gap.

WHAT IF I DON'T GET THE REBATE CHECK WHEN I SHOULD?

Beneficiaries who hit the donut hole after the program has begun should expect to receive their check within 45 days. Your rebate may be delayed if Medicare doesn't have information from your Medicare drug plan showing that you reached the coverage gap in time to include you in the next mailing. You should call your Medicare drug plan to make sure all of your information has been sent to Medicare. If you don't get your rebate check, contact 1-800-MEDICARE. Please note that individuals receiving Medicare Extra Help will not receive a rebate check.

HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE \$250 REBATE CHECK OR THE NEW HEALTH CARE LAW?

Please refer to the brochure *Medicare and the New Health Care Law--What it Means for You* that Medicare has sent you. You can also visit www.medicare.gov, or call 1-800-MEDICARE.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR PRESCRIPTION COVERAGE? COMING IN 2011 AND BEYOND...

If you reach the coverage gap in 2011, you may get a 50% discount on your brand name prescription drugs at the time you buy them. In subsequent years it begins to phase in additional discounts for brand-name and generic drugs until the donut hole is completely closed. Stay tuned for more information from Medicare.

For more information, please call Congressman Levin's district office at (586) 498-7122 or (248) 968-2025.

Prepared by the Office of Congressman Sander Levin